2. The 'New Industrial Policy and other concession in the North Eastern Region' announced *vide* O.M. No. EA/1/2/96-IPD, dated 24.12.1997 (NEIP, 1997) will cease to operate with effect from 1.4.2007. Industrial Units which have commenced commercial production on or before 31.3.2007 will continue to get benefits/incentives under NEIP, 1997.

3. Government reserves the right to modify any part of the Policy in public interest.

4. All concerned Ministries/Departments of the Government of India are requested to amend their respective Acts/rules/notifications etc. and issue necessary instructions for giving effect to these decisions.

Sd./
(N.N. Prasad)
Joint Secretary to the Government of India

Copy for information and necessary action to:

(i) All Ministries/Departments of the Government of India and Planning Commission.

(ii) Chief Secretaries of the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim.

(iii) Secretary (Industries) of the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim.

(iv) The North East Industrial Development Finance Corporation (NEDFi), Guwahati.

Copy also to:

(i) Cabinet Secretariat,

(ii) PMO.

CBI investigation into pulses export firms

4472. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether CBI has been ordered to investigate into the irregularities committed in export of pulses by M/s. Jetking International, M/s. Kohinoor Foods and M/s. KRBL Ltd.;

(b) whether DRI has also found abnormalities and foul play in documents of the firms as a *prima facie* manipulation of the expiry date and prices; and

(c) if so, whether the above firms are restricted/banned/blacklisted for the time being and not allowed to export ever after lifting of the ban?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Necessary proceedings under the FT(DR) Act, 1992 against the above firms have been initiated.

Head count of religious communities

4473. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Army refused to give information regarding head count of religious communities in armed forces;

(b) if so, what are the reasons cited for refusal; and

(c) whether sharing information will harm the nation in any way?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) Armed Forces have a secular and a political character. Recruitment to the Forces is based on merit and is open to every citizen of the country without any discrimination on the basis of their caste, creed, religion or region. All the personnel from all communities and regions work together without any distinction on the basis of caste, creed or religion. Therefore, it was not considered desirable to supply any data relating to particular religious community in respect of the Army as it would have affected the ethos and cohesiveness of the forces.

Status of Defence canteen employees

4474. SHRI K.E. ISMAIL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the existing Defence canteens and the number of employees in each of these canteens;